

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

5 1. A method for providing a location of products to a customer in a retail environment, said method comprising the steps of:

10 attaching a product locator unit to a shopping aid utilized within said retail environment, said product locator having an access point for entering a customer ID, a signalling mechanism for alerting said customer to a location of a desired product, and a program algorithm for correctly identifying said desired product;

15 receiving a user specified desired product, said desired product being linked to said customer ID;

20 comparing said desired products to products found in particular locations of said retail environment to determine a location of said desired products; and

signalling to said customer the location of said desired product via said signalling mechanism.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said product locator unit in said attaching step is comprised of a base unit and a portable unit, said attaching step further comprising the steps of:

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receiving product signals being projected within said retail environment utilizing a signal sensor of said portable unit; and

transmitting said product signals back to said base unit.

3. The method of Claim 2, further comprising the steps of:

receiving at said base unit said product signals transmitted by said portable unit utilizing a receiver of said base unit;

comparing said product signals with said desired products to determine a match utilizing said program algorithm;

signalling back to said portable unit when said comparing step results in a match; and

in response to said signalling step, alerting said customer via said portable unit of a location of said desired product.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein said attaching step further comprises the step of installing a signalling mechanism for projecting a product and location information within said retail environment.

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5. The method of Claim 1, wherein said signalling step includes the step of visually displaying a location of a desired product on a display screen attached to said product locator unit.

5 6. The method of Claim 1, wherein said signalling step includes the step of printing a report for said customer, said report including a list of desired products and their location.

7. The method of Claim 2, wherein said portable unit is a tag which identifies the particular shopping aid, said attaching step includes the steps of:

linking said tag to said customer ID; and

identifying said customer ID to a cash register when said tag approaches said cash register, thereby allowing for the application of product discounts affiliated with said customer ID.

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8. A system for providing a location of products to a customer in a retail environment, said system comprising:

5 means for attaching a product locator unit to a shopping aid utilized within said retail environment, said product locator having an access point for entering a customer ID, a signalling mechanism for alerting said customer to a location of a desired product, and a program algorithm for correctly identifying said desired product;

means for receiving a user specified desired product, said desired product being linked to said customer ID;

means for comparing said desired products to products found in particular locations of said retail environment to determine a location of said desired products; and

15 means for signalling to said customer the location of said desired product via said signalling mechanism.

9. The system of Claim 8, wherein said product locator unit in said attaching means is comprised of a base unit and a portable unit, said attaching means further comprising:

20 means for receiving product signals being projected within said retail environment utilizing a signal sensor of said portable unit; and

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means for transmitting said product signals back to said base unit.

10. The system of Claim 9, further comprising:

5 means for receiving at said base unit said product signals transmitted by said portable unit utilizing a receiver of said base unit;

10 means for comparing said product signals with said desired products to determine a match utilizing said program algorithm;

10 means for signalling back to said portable unit when said comparing means results in a match; and

in response to said signalling means, means for alerting said customer via said portable unit of a location of said desired product.

15 11. The system of Claim 8, wherein said attaching means further comprises means for installing a signalling mechanism for projecting a product and location information within said retail environment.

20 12. The system of Claim 8, wherein said signalling means includes means for visually displaying a location of a desired product on a display screen attached to said product locator unit.

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13. The system of Claim 8, wherein said signalling means includes means for printing a report for said customer, said report including a list of desired products and their location.

5 14. The system of Claim 9, wherein said portable unit is a tag which identifies the particular shopping aid, said attaching means includes:

means for linking said tag to said customer ID; and

10 means for identifying said customer ID to a cash register when said tag approaches said cash register, thereby allowing for the application of product discounts affiliated with said customer ID.

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15. A computer program product for providing a location of products to a customer in a retail environment, said computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium; and

5 program instructions on said computer readable medium for:

attaching a product locator unit to a shopping aid utilized within said retail environment, said product locator having an access point for entering a customer ID, a signalling mechanism for alerting said customer to a location of a desired product, and a program algorithm for correctly identifying said desired product;

receiving a user specified desired product, said desired product being linked to said customer ID;

15 comparing said desired products to products found in particular locations of said retail environment to determine a location of said desired products; and

signalling to said customer the location of said desired product via said signalling mechanism.

20 16. The computer program product of Claim 15, wherein said product locator unit is comprised of a base unit and a

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portable unit, said program instructions for said attaching step further comprising program instructions for:

5 receiving product signals being projected within said retail environment utilizing a signal sensor of said portable unit; and

transmitting said product signals back to said base unit.

17. The computer program product of Claim 16, further comprising program instructions for:

10 receiving at said base unit said product signals transmitted by said portable unit utilizing a receiver of said base unit;

15 comparing said product signals with said desired products to determine a match utilizing said program algorithm;

signalling back to said portable unit when said comparing step results in a match; and

20 in response to said signalling step, alerting said customer via said portable unit of a location of said desired product.

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18. The computer program product of Claim 15, wherein said program instructions for said attaching step further comprises program instructions for installing a signalling mechanism for projecting a product and location information within said retail environment.

19. The computer program product of Claim 15, wherein said program instructions for said signalling step includes program instructions for visually displaying a location of a desired product on a display screen attached to said product locator unit.

20. The computer program product of Claim 15, wherein said program instructions for said signalling step includes program instructions for printing a report for said customer, said report including a list of desired products and their location.

21. The computer program product of Claim 16, wherein said portable unit is a tag which identifies the particular shopping aid, said program instructions for said attaching step includes program instructions for:

linking said tag to said customer ID; and

identifying said customer ID to a cash register when said tag approaches said cash register, thereby allowing for the application of product discounts affiliated with said customer ID.

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